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homes have again been made happy by the restoration to health—comfortable health, at least—of husbands, fathers, sons, daughters, and many hearts are filled with gratitude and the force of the thought,—

“God’s in His Heaven,
All’s right with the world.”

THE INDIAN ARMY NURSING SERVICE *

BY A. ARKLE

Delegate from the India Nursing Service of Great Britain

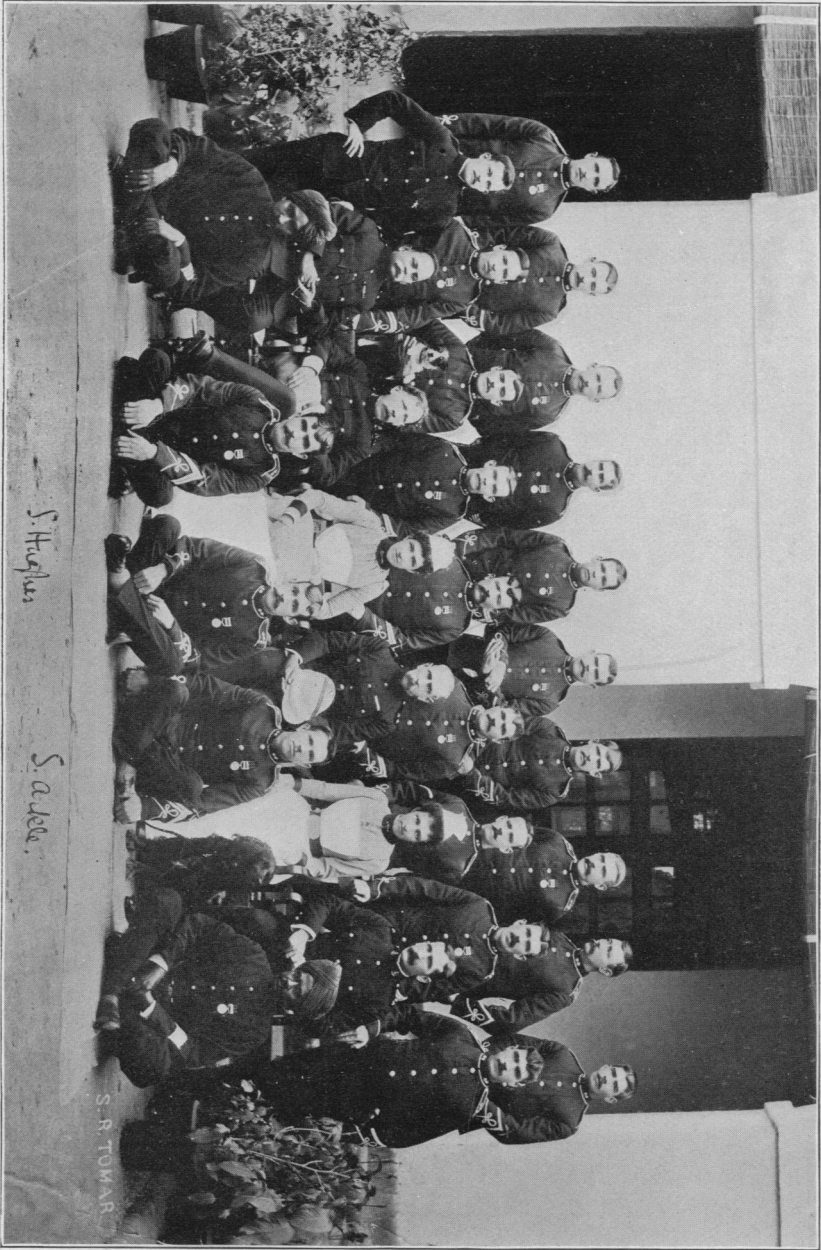
THE Indian Army Nursing Service was initiated by that good friend of the British soldier, Lord Roberts, in 1888, and although it has been in existence only fourteen years, there has been a great advance in the understanding of nurses and nursing in India and of the necessity for nursing, and in the care given to sick soldiers now acknowledged to be necessary for them.

Candidates for the service apply to the Under Secretary of State for India, and must have had *at least* three-years’ training in a civil service hospital. The service is composed, first, of lady superintendents, of whom there are four (one in each command), and nursing sisters, of whom there are between fifty and sixty. We are an integral part of the military-medical department and are subject to court-martial in the usual way. Promotion of nursing sister to lady superintendent is made by the principal medical officer of his Majesty’s forces in India on the grounds of experience, administrative capacity, and personal fitness. Last year six sisters were sent to China when war broke out.

The duration of the term of service is five years, after which time the sister is entitled to one year’s furlough out of India on two-thirds pay with free passage to and from her station. At the end of five years she can leave the service or sign an agreement to return for another term. In the event of her leaving she will receive a gratuity of five hundred rupees (about one hundred and fifty dollars) after the first term, fifteen hundred rupees (about four hundred and fifty dollars) after the second term. (The gratuity given to a lady superintendent is proportionately higher). If she agrees to return, she receives two-thirds pay while on furlough. Should she leave before her first term of service is completed (for any cause save sickness), she will be obliged to pay the sum of twenty-five pounds (one hundred and twenty-five dollars) or give six-months’ notice and pay twenty pounds (one hundred dollars).

After fifteen-years’ service the sister receives a pension of about

* Read before the Congress at Buffalo in September, 1901.



THE HOSPITAL CORPS

two hundred and fifty dollars per annum. After twenty-years' service this pension is increased to about three hundred dollars, with an addition for every year's service as lady superintendent.

In addition to free quarters, fuel, light, and punkali-pullers, the lady superintendent receives three hundred rupees a month, the nursing sister one hundred and seventy-five rupees. When she becomes "senior sister" in a station (where there is no lady superintendent) she receives two hundred rupees. There is always a small compensation allowance varying with the rate of exchange. Pony allowance of thirty rupees a month is allowed on field service provided a pony be kept.

The lady superintendent has control over all the sisters in her command. Once every year she visits the nursing staff of all hospitals in her command for the purpose of inspection, and afterwards submits a full report on the manner in which each sister has done her duty, which reaches the principal medical officer of his Majesty's forces in India through the prescribed channel. Should the report not be favorable, it must be shown to the sister concerned, who has the opportunity of making an appeal, and has the right to have the matter inquired into by a board of officers in the usual way.

The senior nursing sister does the housekeeping and is responsible that order and regularity be carried out in the quarters and in the wards.

When a new sister arrives at a station she usually pays an entrance-fee for the use of crockery, cutlery, glass, etc.,—in fact, for all those things we need in the quarters not provided by government. This is very hard on a sister who is moved often from station to station, and much expense would be spared the sister if the government would grant a small amount yearly to cover these expenses.

The hours of the sisters on duty vary in some stations. As a rule there are three sisters in one station. No. 1 sister comes on duty at seven A.M. and remains until two P.M. No. 2 comes on at two and stays until eight P.M., or nine when there is anyone very seriously ill in the ward. No. 2 again comes on the next morning at seven A.M., while No. 3 is doing night duty from nine P.M. to seven A.M. Night duty we take for a week in turn.

During the term of five years the sister is allowed two-months' privilege leave on full pay. She can also occasionally get (if convenient) ten-days' station leave, and sometimes even three-days' district leave is given. Sick leave up to a maximum of six months is allowed during the term of five years. This leave *must* be taken in India!

For each ward with an average of twenty-five beds there are two orderlies. The orderly's relief is changed every six hours, and in most stations there are four reliefs. Sometimes when special orderlies are required there are as many as eighteen or twenty doing duty in the wards

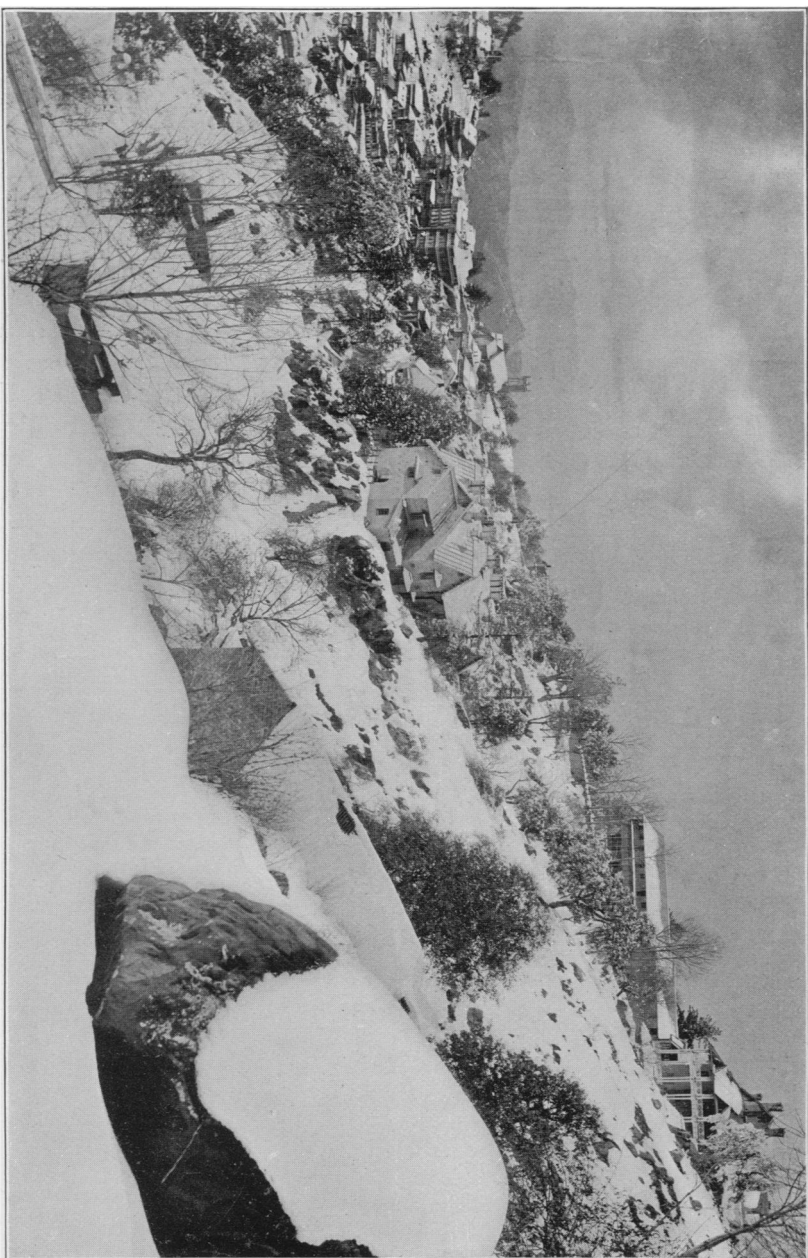
where the sisters work. Before the orderly gets his certificate he is put through a course of stretcher drill by the medical officer, after which (if he passes his examination) his nursing certificate is given, signed by the medical officer and the sister in charge. One great difficulty in training orderlies is the little time one sometimes has in which to do it.

Frequently from stations where no sisters are sanctioned men are sent from the regiments, and are expected to be efficient nurses at the end of three months. This clearly is impossible, and the certificates are not worth much. Now, in stations where there are sisters the orderlies are generally allowed to remain for quite twelve months, only being called in to the regiment once for about a fortnight for their musketry training. At the end of the year, if the man is intelligent, conscientious, and fond of his work, it is surprising how capable a nurse he makes. I have met a few most excellent. If he is not a suitable man in every way, he can always be returned to the regiment and another man sent in his place. In addition to the practical training in the wards, the senior sister holds a class about once a week on the general principles of nursing. Very often orderlies remain three and even four years in the wards at their own request. Native servants do the roughest of the work in the wards.

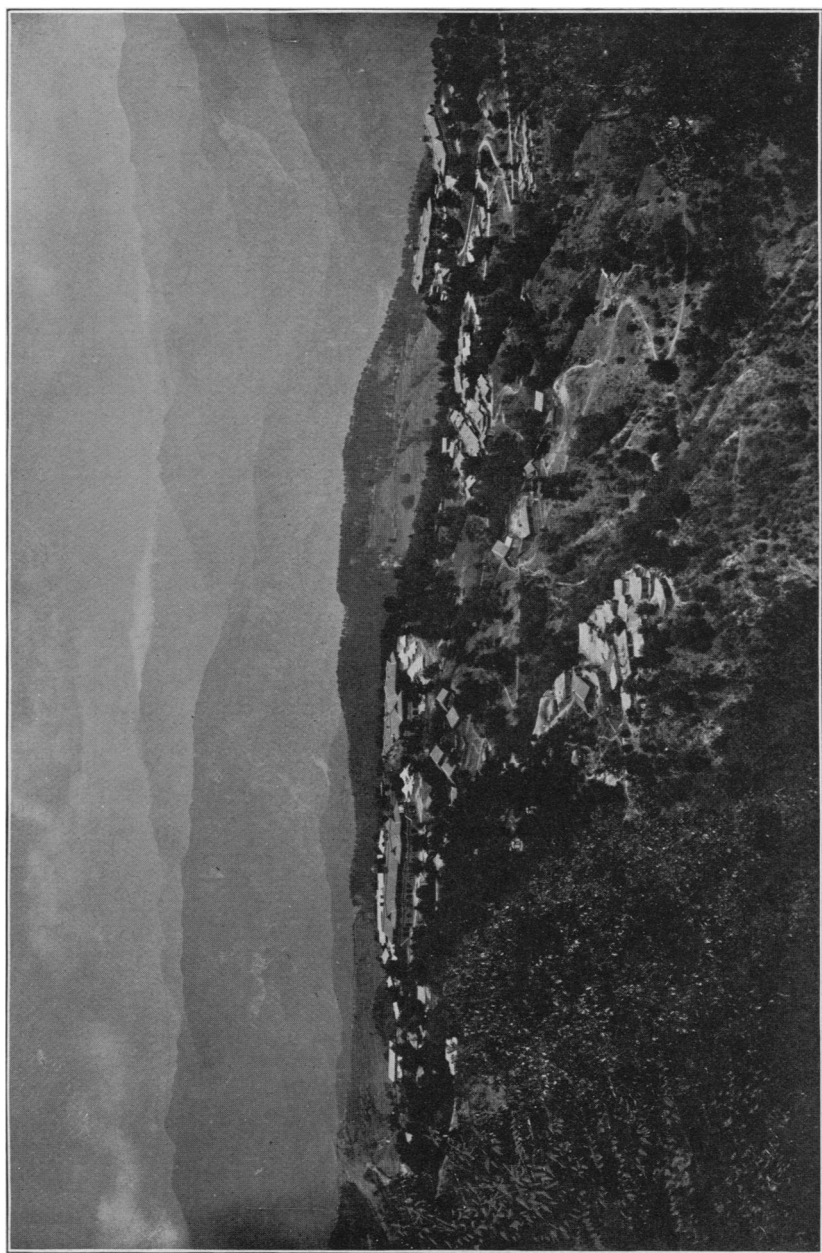
I think it is quite impossible to point out the great good done by the influence of women in the wards (they must be first-class women, both technically as nurses and as ladies) and the good tone introduced by nurses fresh from the perfection of management of a civil hospital at home.

From my own experience I find the orderlies much better and more willing to learn than I expected. I have seen them so infinitely gentle when handling a sick comrade, and soldiers, when sick, behave most splendidly, and are always grateful and cheerful. For our wards all the cases are acute; when convalescent, they go to the other wards; when chronic, they come home to Netley.

When there are many cases and the work is heavy (which, by the way, it almost always is in some stations), the sister, in addition to her ordinary duties, has to help the orderlies, and sponging patients with the thermometer one hundred and twelve degrees in the shade is no easy work, and you can imagine how persistently one has to sponge or ice-pack in a hot climate, and how imperative it is in cases of heat-stroke and fever. Yes, after some months of this work one does so long for the delights of the cool Himalayas; and with what a sigh of relief one wakes up the first morning of the sixty-days' privilege leave. It is astonishing how many of the orderlies prefer remaining in the furnace below to what they describe as "climbing them khuds" (khud means a mountain-side).



MURREE, A HILL STATION IN THE PUNJAB, IN WINTER
Murree from above Telegraph Office



DALHOUSIE, A HILL STATION, IN THE SUMMER

The suggestions I would make are :

1. That a messing allowance be granted.
2. That the number of the sisters be increased, so that no military station is without them.
3. That the sick-leave might be extended to leave in England or a sea-voyage if the medical officer considers it essential, the government to provide the passage both ways. At the present time our sick-leave *must* be taken in the country, and I think we all agree that India is not generally chosen as a health resort.

At the same time our service is young, and already the government has made many reforms, and scarcely a year passes that one does not find some little alteration for the better, and I am sure in time it will be *almost* perfect. Our quarters are always large and comfortable, the pay is good, the amount of leave is most generous, there is a pension at the end of our service, and there is that home-feeling one has in one's quarters surrounded by one's little gods. One can keep a pony-trap or bicycle, and one can have one's live pets about one. This to an animal-lover means a great deal, and I think a real change is good for one. When off duty we can potter around in the garden, play tennis or any other game we like,—golf is a favorite,—and I think a good canter across the country is about the best medicine for a nurse I know of; after it one goes on duty so fresh. I take it that to *really remember the men* and give them of our best when on duty, we must try to quite *forget* them when away from the wards.

Now I am afraid you will all be a wee bit disappointed at my paper, but it is quite impossible to explain everything to you unless you come out to India. I cannot expect you to believe, for instance, that the thermometer can drop thirty degrees in thirty seconds, though this is a fact.



“ . . . EVER the blind world
Knows not its Angels of Deliverance
Till they stand glorified 'twixt earth and heaven.
It stones the Martyr; then, with praying hands,
Sees the God mount his chariot of fire,
And calls sweet names, and worships what it spurned.
It slays the Man to deify the Christ.

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To those who walk beside them, great men seem
Mere common earth; but distance makes them stars.
As dying limbs do lengthen out in death,
So grows the stature of their after-fame.”

—MASSEY.